

House burns outside St. Stephen

DERWIN GOWAN
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

OLD RIDGE • The home of Randy and Melva Gregory at Old Ridge on Route 3, immediately outside St. Stephen, burned on Wednesday night.

The emergency call came in at 7:26 p.m., St. Stephen Fire Chief Jeff Richardson said in an interview on Thursday. The couple were at their business, Randy's Towing, immediately next door to the house, when a passerby saw the flames and stopped in to alert them, the chief said.

About 40 members of the St. Stephen, Oak Bay and Calais, Maine, fire departments arrived to fight the fire. They used tanker trucks to shuttle water up the hill from the hydrant at St. Stephen High School inside town limits, the chief said. They stayed at the scene for about three hours.

They bought this house, closer to the business than their former home, in September, Melva said. The couple had moved in, but Richardson said that renovations were under way.

The firefighters contained the blaze to the rear part of the house, but it still suffered "a fair amount of structural damage," Richardson said.

The fire started in a crawl space above the kitchen ceiling, the chief said. He did not feel confident to speculate on what caused the fire. "Not exactly. We've got a pretty good idea," he said. The couple did not burn



The home of Randy and Melva Gregory at Old Ridge, outside St. Stephen, burned on Wednesday night. They said on Thursday morning that they had a place to stay temporarily. PHOTO: DERWIN GOWAN/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

wood and, in fact, had a heat pump, Richardson said.

Nobody was hurt in the fire. The couple said that they have a place to stay temporarily. They were working at the business on Thursday morning,

waiting for a member of the St. Stephen Fire Department to accompany them to retrieve items from the house. There were safety concerns especially about going upstairs.

Richardson said that the house will

likely be torn down but, by late Thursday morning, the Gregorlys were still waiting for insurance company representatives to assess the damage and decide whether to repair or build anew.

Street gang member had wiretap detectors when busted

MIKE LANDRY
TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

SAINT JOHN • Eight months after police stormed into his south end home, Mark Douglas Gillespie pleaded guilty and was sentenced on Wednesday afternoon to two years in federal prison for crimes associated with the Chrome Devils street gang.

Gillespie's conviction follows that of John Kilpatrick, who was the treasurer of the Chrome Devils. He was sentenced to six months in jail in August for possession of crack cocaine and marijuana, illegal weapons and the proceeds of crime.

Gillespie's role in the gang wasn't identified in court. But when police searched his Britain Street home, they found drug sale score sheets, wiretap detectors, tracking devices, Chrome Devils apparel and a total of \$7,200 divided between two envelopes, one marked "Chrome Devils" and the other "Outlaws." That second envelope was for the Outlaws Motorcycle Club, a worldwide group with chapters in Ontario and Newfoundland, to which the Chrome Devils were affiliated.

On the strength of tips received early last year, police began investigating Gillespie, 48, for trafficking in Saint John. The surveillance lasted three months, from April to June 25, when police effected search warrants against Gillespie, Kilpatrick and a suspected stash house.

Police observed Gillespie meeting with individuals they knew were involved in the drug trade, and saw him repeatedly visit 98 Orange St. Tips led police to believe that residence was being used as a stash house.

When Gillespie was arrested in June, police found a key alongside \$520 in cash in Gillespie's pants. The key was for 98 Orange St. Inside that residence, police found 72 grams of crack cocaine packaged in individual bags.

Crown prosecutor Rebekah Logan didn't indicate the estimated street value of the drugs. But in another drug case last week, the Crown said almost 36 grams was equal to \$12,000. That would mean Gillespie's drugs would have been worth an estimated \$24,000.

Police also alleged they found blasting caps during the search, and Gillespie was charged with having an explosive substance. However, Crown prosecutor Jill Knee said the alleged crucial evidence of the said blasting caps was "destroyed by the Saint John police force."

Knee didn't go into any detail about what happened to the alleged evidence, but it was the reason why Gillespie had pleaded guilty.

Gillespie had elected to be tried by judge and jury, a trial that was to begin earlier this week. But only days before jurors were to be selected, the trial was scrubbed and Gillespie re-elected to be tried in provincial court.

Gillespie's lawyer, David Mudge, said he was able to negotiate a plea bargain thanks to the destruction of the alleged evidence — his client would plead guilty to having the crack for purposes of trafficking, and the proceeds of crime, if the Crown dropped the explosives charge. He was also facing a charge of simple possession of marijuana, but that count too was dropped.

With Gillespie's guilty pleas, the Crown also withdrew all charges against his sister, Laurie Gillespie, who had been co-accused on some of the counts.

Judge Andrew Palmer agreed to the joint recommendation of two years federal time. He noted that the police resources it takes to apprehend criminals in the drug trade means a stiff penalty must be enforced.

The two-year sentence is new time, on top of the eight months Gillespie has spent in custody on remand. He was given credit for that time, which would have been equal to just more than a year of jail time. Gillespie was said to have a lengthy record, and had previously served years in prison for drug trafficking in 1998.

Mudge said his client wasn't only engaged in the drug trade, but a user. He said Gillespie went through forced withdrawal on remand, and is now on methadone to treat his addiction.

"I apologize to the citizens of Saint John, my mother and to God for the waste of my skills," said Gillespie. "I could have done something better."



Enomatic wine dispensers give customers the option for 50 cents they can try a wine before purchasing it. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



Historic photos of the local Moosehead brewery decorate the inside of the specialty beer cooler at the new NB Liquor store on the east side set to open at 1 p.m. Friday. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



Retail sales associate Jennie Ferrar stocks a specialty wine at the new NB Liquor store at East Point which is set to open at 1 p.m. Friday. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



The new NB Liquor store at East Point set to open at 1 p.m. Friday. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL



Jonathan Reid, product advisor, showing a group of staff how to use the Enomatic wine dispensary at the new NB Liquor store at East Point. PHOTO: REBECCA WATSON/TELEGRAPH-JOURNAL

Interactive liquor store opening at East Point Friday afternoon

DRINK → B1

A new black, white and copper logo, which matches the store's interior colour scheme, modernizes the look of the retailer.

However the exterior logo, which is all black, is slightly different than the interior one that has NB letters in copper, "which represent the alcohol

industry's copper stills and copper pots used for brewing alcohol," Barbour said.

The building itself is designed by Turner Fleischer, an architecture firm known for its work designing big names such as Canadian Tire, McDonald's, and the East Point Shopping area.

Pure black backdrops have been implemented to better highlight

merchandise, Barbour said.

"And larger, lifted coolers help showcase the chilled bottles," he said. "The product is really a feature in that cooler now, it's not just a cooler."

Accordion shelving in the middle of the store allows staff to shrink or grow the section depending on inventory levels.

Something else new are the various cocktail mixtures posted around the store to give customers new drink ideas.

And don't forget about the pairing signs, Barbour said.

"Again, going toward education, all about the customer," he said. "We are showing you how you can pair some of your wine with certain ingredients and certain foods."